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## TIIE BOOK OF CONSOLATIONS

 OR
## THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

OF

## MÂR ÎSHÔ'-YAHBH OF KÛPHLÂNÂ IN ADIABENE

THE SYRIAC TEXT<br>EDITED WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

BY

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PART 1.
THE SYRIAC TEXT

## LONDON

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## I DEDICATE

THIS BOOK IN ALL AFFECTION TO MY FATHER,
W. D. SCOTT-MONCRIEFF C.E.

## PREFACE.

The present Volume contains the first part of an Edition of the Pastoral Epistles which were written by Îshô'-yahbh the Head of the Nestorian Church, between the years 620 and 658 A.D. These Epistles fall readily into three parts, viz:-those which were written whilst he was Bishop of Môṣul before the year 628; those which were written after his promotion to be Metropolitan of Arbela and Môṣul, between the years 628 and 644; and those during the period of about fourteen years in which he was Catholicus or supreme Head of the Nestorian Church. Each group of epistles possesses its own peculiar interest and characteristics, and each may be regarded as having a value sui generis; for this reason it has been thought well to publish each group of letters separately and in chronological order. The following pages therefore contain the Syriac Text of the letters which Îshô'- yahbh wrote during his rule over the see of Môșul.

When we consider the high social position which Îshô'-yahbh naturally held as the son of the Persian nobleman Bastôhmagh, who seems to have been a man of large estates and much possessions, and when we also consider that he flourished and held office during some of the most eventful years in the history of the

Nestorian Church, and was an eye-witness of the fierce struggle between the Byzantine Greeks and the Persians, and when we further consider his keen ecclesiastical instincts and his political activity, it is not surprising that his letters have a value which is possessed by few of the epistolary efforts of his fellowcountrymen. Besides all this we know that he found time to take a genuine interest in the advancement of learning, and that several of the most important works of the Nestorian Church were compiled or re-edited at his suggestion and under his fostering and enthusiastic care. He was himself the editor of several works, and an examination of these and his epistles show that he was a very learned man, and that he was able to write with some elegance and great fluency on the subjects that were nearest his heart.

Among European scholars the first to make known the general drift of the contents of Îshô'-yahbh's Epistles was J. S. Assemânî, who, in the first Part of the third Volume of his Bibliotheca Orientalis published at Rome in 1725 , gave a brief summary in Latin of each letter. Of the epistles which Assemânî considered to be of special importance he published lengthy extracts in Syriac with a Latin translation. Little further interest seems to have been taken in these letters until towards the close of the last century when Dr. Wallis Budge published an edition of the Syriac text and an English translation of the "Historia Monastica" by Thomas, Bishop of Margâ about 840 A.D. under the title of "The Book of Governors". In the elucidation of Thomas' narrative, Dr. Budge found it necessary to print a comparatively large number of Îshô'-yahbh's letters, among them being some which had already been made known by
the Roman publication. The authorities which he used for his texts were two carefully written modern MSS. which were copied for him during the periods of his residence in Môṣul. Dr. Budge has allowed me to print the first section of his MSS. in the present work. I am also indebted to him for his friendly help in reading the proofs and in the preparation of this volume. It is hoped that the second and third groups of Îshô'yahbh's letters will appear at no distant date.

## PHILIP SCOTT-MONCRIEFF.

London, March $31^{\text {st }} 1904$.

## INTRODUCTION.

Îshô'-yahbh III, the well known head of the Nestorian Church at the close of the second half of the VIIt ${ }^{\text {th }}$ century, and the author of the epistles, the first section of which is printed in this book, was the son of Bastôhmagh a Persian nobleman of Kûphlânâ, a small town or village situated in Adiabene, the tract of fertile country which lies east of the Tigris between the Great and Little Zâbh rivers. Bastôhmagh, whose name according to Hoffmann ${ }^{1}$ means "the man with a large family", had great possessions in Adiabene, and one of his estates called Bêth Zîwâ, was situated in Margà. Rabban Jacob, who was the founder of the Monastery of Bêth'Abhê about A.D. 595, by some means became acquainted with Bastôhmagh, and a close friendship seems to have sprung up between them. This friendship was strengthened by a curious incident related by Thomas of Margâ (ed. Budge II. p. 84), who tells us that on one occasion when Bastôhmagh was coming to visit his property in Margâ, which he was in the habit of doing frequently, he saw a number of sorceresses washing their clothes in the Great Zâbh. As they were

[^0]washing they kept singing a number of "songs of devils", and everything that was round about them danced as they sang. Now when he had passed by the women, a refrain of one of the songs which they had been singing fixed itself in his mind, and whilst he was thinking upon it, there appeared unto him suddenly a number of devils who asked him to tell them what they should do. The Persian craftily ordered them to collect the stones which were lying about and to pile them in a heap, and, when they had done this, to follow him as he rode on his mule. With haste and in fear he drove his mule along as fast as he could, and when he had arrived at Rabban Jacob's cell, he dismounted, and telling the devils to look after his mule, went in and told the holy man what had happened. Jacob then asked him to repeat the refrain of the song which he had heard, and, as Bastôhmâgh did so, he traced the words with his finger in the dust on the ground. When this was done Rabban made the sign of the cross over the writing, and this act had the effect of blotting out from his mind the memory of the devilish refrain which haunted him. This being so Rabban laughed, and told him to go out and look for his mule, because the devils to whom he had entrusted him had loosed the animal and had themselves run away.

It seems tolerably clear from various passages in Thomas of Margâ's work that Bastôhmâgh was not only a friend of Rabban Jacob, but also a generous benefactor of his monastery, and we are certain that the success of the monastery and the well-being of its monks for many years depended upon the gifts which were made to it by this enlightened man.

Passing now to his son Îshố-yahbh we know that he was a disciple of Rabban Jacob of Bêth 'Âbhê in the early part of the VII ${ }^{\text {th }}$ century, and that he studied at the famous school at Nisibis where the companion who shared his cell was Hormîzd. At a comparatively early age he was appointed Bishop of Môsul, and he appears to have lived in his diocese until 626. During the years of his Episcopate the wars between the Persians and Byzantine Greeks waxed fierce, and as Îshô'-yahbh was sent on a mission to Heraclius in 630 A. D. by Bôrân the daughter of Khusrau, with the view of promoting peace between the belligerents, it will be well to recall briefly a few of the facts in connection with these wars. These conflicts had been going on since the days of Khusrau I. Nushirvan who began the feud in the time of Justinian. Khusrau I. was succeeded in 579 by Hormîzd his son, whose reign was one of great misrule and trouble, the country's enemies being kept at bay by Bahram, the great Persian hero. In 590 the Persian army revolted to Bahram and Hormizd was deposed and killed. In the same year however Bahram was in his turn slain and Khusran II. Parwez obtained the throne. The beginning of the campaign that he conducted against the Greeks was a most victorious one, the conquest of Syria being accomplished in 608-6ir. The fortresses of Mardin, Dârâ, Amida, Edessa, Hierapolis, Chalcis and Aleppo were taken and destroyed. Pushing further south through Palestine and Egypt he marched as far as Carthage, Jerusalem falling in 6I4. At this period the Byzantine throne was occupied by Phocas, a centurion who had deposed and assassinated the Emperor Maurice. This murder had given Khusrau the excuse
for his campaign, which was ostensibly to avenge the death of Maurice who had been his ally in the struggle for the throne. During the reign of Phocas, "which afflicted Europe with ignominious peace and Asia with devastating war," ${ }^{1}$ Khusrau met with no resistance on the part of the Byzantines. A revolution however took place in 6io headed by Heraclius in which Phocas was slain and Heraclius made emperor. The first years of the new sovereign's rule were spent in lethargy, but in 62 I , when nearly every Roman province had been lost, he equipped an expedition, and in 622 he seriously defeated the Persians on the banks of the Issus. During the years 623-6.26 he made victorious inroads into central Persia and Armenia, the diocese of Îshô'-yahbh being in close proximity to the centre of the theatre of war. In 627 the power of Khusrau was permanently broken and in the following year he was assassinated and Siroes his son ascended the throne. ${ }^{2}$ In 630 a mission to Heraclius, the object of which was to promote peace, was despatched by Bôrân the daughter of Khusrau, headed by Îshô' - yahbh II. who was then Patriarch, and with it went Îshô'- yahbh of Môṣul, who had become Metropolitan of Arbelâ and Môsul in 628. The other principal members of the embassy were, Cyriacus Bishop of Nisibis, Paul Metropolitan of Adiabene, Gabriel Bishop of Kerkûk and Sâhdônâ Bishop of Mâhôzê-dhě-Ârîwân.

The object of the Mission appears to have been accomplished with satisfaction to all parties, for, "Christ our Lord, the Lord of the worlds, and the Governor

[^1]and Guardian of the two countries and of the whole world gave these shepherds mercy in the sight of the Greeks, and they received their assembly and petition as if they had been the angels of God. Thus these holy men were rewarded for all the care and heavy toil of that long journey and they returned in peace to this country, each man to his episcopal throne." ${ }^{1}$

Whilst the members of the Mission were passing through the city of Antioch they had occasion to rest in one of the churches there, and Îshô'-yahbh of Môṣul saw in a conspicuous place of honour a white marble casket surmounted with the figures of two cherubs. On making enquiries he learned that the coffer contained relics of the apostles, and seeing that a considerable number of miracles were wrought by their means he was seized with a desire to gain possession of it. According to Thomas of Mârgậ (Bk. II. C. v) he prayed to God that he might be able to acquire it, and asked Him to support his own efforts by His help. The exact means by which Îshô'- yahbh made himself master of the coffer we know not, but it is pretty certain that being a wealthy man, he gave a large sum of money to the guardians of the church who allowed him to remove it in a secret manner. Thomas of Mârgâ naïvely remarks that he committed the matter to God, asking that while he, Îshô'-yahbh, worked like a man, Christ would protect and defend him like a God.

Soon after the return of the Mission an event took place which was a serious blow to the Nestorian Church. Sâhhlônâ the Bishop of Mâhôzê-dhě-Ârîwân, in Bêth

[^2]Garmai, and a man of considerable influence, apostasized to the Jacobite party, publishing his defence in a work entitled "The Fictitiousness of Faith". Îshô'-yahbh, who was naturally highly indignant at this step, wrote a letter to the clergy of Mâhôzề-dhě-Arîwân of which the following is Dr. Budge's translation:-(Thomas of Mârgâ Vol i, p. Lxxir).
"To my beloved brethren the God-loving, venerable, "believing and renowned clergy in the Holy Church of "Mâhôzê-dhě-Arîwân, Îshô'-yahbh your brother in the "Lord, Peace.
"O my brethren, we have committed a fault, you "and I, which is worthy of absolution. And now that "this fault hath through itself become revealed, and "hath, although having perceived it I tried to hide it, "kicked out causing great confusion and tumult, and "hath cast away from it the covering of its shame, and "hath stood impudently forth in the sight of all, it is "necessary that I should myself come to you that we "may meditate together upon what it is needful to do, "and that we should give a healthy mending to the "injury which has been done. For we erred when "we exalted to the high position of headship, by reason "of a small outward manifestation of excellence of con"duct and a hope [for further excellence], a man lack"ing in understanding, who varied the instability of his "thoughts by a multitude of changes of opinion, [through] "not having perceived beforehand his defection from "the orthodox faith which happened in a secret chamber "a short time before, when by the evil desire of the "love of dominion he was drawn to corrupt the con"fession of truth by his stupid subtilties. Only in this "he was very crafty, and he hid in secret that silly
"treatise on the perversion of his opinion until he had, "with an abandonment worthy of suffering, seized the "dominion over you. But as I have said, we deserve "forgiveness because we were carried away by error, "and because the disease of changeableness of the man "took place suddenly, and was wrought in a secret "chamber, and because we never had been acquainted "with this evil habit of instability in him, and because "also with diabolical craft he manifested his foul belief "only before those who were able to bestow upon him "in return that which he was most anxious to possess "namely the Bishopric of Adiabene. And having fallen "from this with the loss of his hope, an evil fate cast "him into an orthodox city, that is to say to you, who "have with striving even unto blood, cleansed through "a length of years the evil seed of Satan from among "you. And ye have purified the dwelling-place of your "habitation and your believing Church from all error "of a plurality of forms of those who with the oneness "of Person (i>0 ss), that is to say oneness of Nature, "" "ruptness of their blasphemies. And behold ye are "this day by the grace of God one body of orthodox "men which shineth gloriously with the rays of the "vivifying light of the one adorable and glorious Person "(2gosis) of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who is God over "all; Who hath equality of utterance with His Father in "a perfect Person (20080), and Who hath also equality "of utterance with us in the perfect speech of Person "(200s)) Who showeth forth the unity of the mani"festation of Lordship perfectly in the glorious Person ")(\$0.90) of two forms; Whose human body when shin"ing with the rays of Gochead appeareth to the eyes
"to be man, but to the mind, God, and every knee "shall bow and every tongue confess Him. No man "shall teach his fellow-citizens, or his brother, and say "'Know the Lord (2.2s)', for we all know Him and we "all adore Him. This then in a few words is the name "and power and scope of the unity of our Lord. But "certain erring men in time past through their lack of "understanding, that is to say audacity, having fallen "from this mystery have set many stupid obstacles "against the word of truth, and having become foolish "in their mind have become aliens from the life of "God. And moreover also the written and unwritten "Divine word, which is in the Holy Church, hath in "the mouth of her ministers in all generations led the "objection of daring men from the pasture of the in"heritance of the Lord, until this time of our sojourn"ing, which is the old age of the world. And I was "thinking, O my beloved brethren, that now that the "world hath become worn out and old and very aged, "and hath already declined, that is to say [now that] "the human understanding hath also perished and can "no longer be a discoverer of evil, that is to say a "silly receiver of vain imaginations, such stumbling"blocks as these must remain of necessity, and we, "that is all of us who are under the wings of ortho"doxy and to whom hath come the lot of inheritance "in the holy house of God, would rest a little from "the injury of their offence. But now that the error "of ignorance hath broken out at this time from a "foolish, old, worn out and shaken mind through a "man void of understanding, whom a temporary fate "hath brought to the city of your habitation in the "name of governorship, it is necessary for our recon-
"ciliation that it be disturbed, and that we should give "the necessary explanation of this stupid offender. Now "he was a lover of this species of heresies, and [de"sired] that they should acquire in the world through "him the evil fame of renown, and therefore that silly "man was himself led astray and turned aside to con"temptible folly. And he wrote an absurd composition, "entitled 'The Fictitiousness of Faith', without either en"treaty on the part of men or the need of necessity, "which he hid from myself and from all those who "are like unto me until that time of which I have "spoken before. And with difficulty and after that he "had received the service of dominion over you, when "by the command of the rulers of the age, time brought "us all to the city of your habitation, on remembering "slightly some rumour which [I had heard] a short "time before I asked him if he had written anything "according to what I had heard. And having confessed "that he had written something I asked him why he "had hidden it from me. Then being near and he "having uttered some feeble apology for this I demanded "that he should bring before me what he had written. "And when he had brought it and I had found it to "be of an evil nature, I rebuked him privately and "secretly with a severe reproof, and being moved by "the severity of the reproof, he promised, but un"truthfully, to correct the things which he had wickedly "written. And having believed him to be a man who "had but recently erred I hoped that he had corrupted "his belief not from natural wickedness of mind, but "from the evilness of pride; and I defined for him a "time for amendment, which was more than the need "of the matter required, and I departed from thence,
"having hidden his error in silence. Now he did not "only not fulfil his promise, but he also went to his "supporters who made him confident by their speeches, "and he was strengthened to confirm his babble (ティa) "by the help of those whom he imagined to be suffi"ciently powerful to support him. And when I heard "of the fraud which he had practised upon truth I "wrote an exhortation and entreaty to him in brotherly "feeling, and I made two dear brethren and fellow "disciples of his and mine participators in the secret "of the matter, and I sent them to him promptly, and "I commanded them not to inform any one of you "concerning these things, in order that I might not "make an evil cause for the man who was seeking an "evil cause. And when he had read those things which "were said to him by those God-loving brethren, he "manifested a deceitful pretence and brought forth this "silly book, and at their instigation expunged sixteen "chapters in the presence of the brethren, and he dis"missed them in peace with a letter of gratitude to "myself. And when these God-loving brethren had "arrived and had informed me concerning the obedience "of the silly man, I rejoiced and thanked our Lord "that He had not allowed His feeble servant to fall "from the good hope of orthodoxy of belief. And that "silly man, wishing to reprove me because I had erred "[in believing] in him in vain, to make known to every "man that he was working the will of Satan, rose up "straightway after the departure of those God-loving "brethren from him, and took my letter to him and "carried it diligently to that honourable head, through "relying upon whom he had dared to fall into that "silly wickedness. Now this he did with wicked craft
"and diabolical artifice that he might stir him up to "enmity against me and to fight against me, and this "was as ye have already heard, the cause of the "sedition ( $\sigma \tau$ óroıऽ) against me from which arose wickedly "all those things which have troubled the world. These "things then did that stupid man work by the agency "of Satan, and he set himself [to be] an occasion of "evil to all those who wished to try and to know if "there existed among the children of the Church, that "is to say among the supporters of truth, any love of "belief. So then, if the zeal of the love of the truth "which is in you, that is the zeal of the whole Church "of God, be stirred up, and reject and cast out from "among you that man lacking in understanding, those "[who are like unto him] will be warned and will cease "to make manifest themselves in such like things. But "if you, that is the whole Church of God, cease from "that silly man, and allow him to remain in the honour"able position of headship, like unto one who hath in "no way offended, then will those men be strengthened "and encouraged to advance in opposition until they "dare to attempt greater things. Thus even as now "shall be fulfilled that which is said, "Shall the Son of "'Man come and find faith on earth?' (St. Luke xviii. 8.) "It is necessary then, O beloved brethren, those whom "God hath reared in a noble discipleship from of old "until this present, for you to be a chaste spectacle "and a beautiful form to all believing men in every "place. For many generations ye have preserved un"injured the surety of orthodoxy and the fair fame of "your correctness of belief hath flown into every soul "of the Church, and especially because I, the feeble "one, have also preached the testimony of your ex-
"cellence everywhere, and I háve shown my fellow "disciples and companions in orthodoxy to all men, "must ye, in very deed, manifest the might of your "belief by the proof of deeds, and ye must not allow "to exist among you a place for corrupt faith to enter "therein through a stupid man whom time and occasion "have brought to you. For ye know, O truly wise "men, that from a small spark a fire is kindled, and "from this evil entrance of [the doctrine of] the unity "of the Person of Christ many forms of blasphemies "against God and against this government [will arise] "and wretched men will lapse into wickedness. For "that one Person (2soss) must of necessity indicate one "Nature, ye all know like teachers of God, although "the ignorant and stupid man thought it to be im"possible, and that by this zoose we should understand
 "even as that silly writer was himself anxious to de"monstrate, the necessity of the ancient opinions upon "the words forbiddeth, even as ye also know and every "man is acquainted with [this fact], although that man "void of understanding doth not possess any such "opinions. And that a single constitution and a single "posso are not able to arise from Godhead and man"hood, even as that stupid writer hath stated, the im"possibility of matters proclaimeth as it were with a "loud voice to all men; the silly man then, vainly "laboured to beat down the bounds of impossibility "with stupid assistance. And had he not been the "most ignorant of men, he would never have dared "to have written error like unto this in a book, but "would have kept it in his heart, although he talked "freely about the stupidity of his being entrapped by
"error like unto this, even as others who have fallen "sick in such matters have reserved them for their "opinion and speech only and have never dared to "commit them to writing. Now therefore, O beloved "brethren, inasmuch as the diabolical error against the "true belief began to manifest itself among you it is "your very right and bounden duty, more than all "[other] men to stand mightily against it that by the "little breath of the fire of your zeal ye may quickly "persuade the stirrer up of the war [to desist from "his] opposition against the truth, and that by the "outcome of matters ye may conform to yourselves all "the fair renown which ye have acquired, and that ye "may find for me your beloved friend-but rather for "the whole Church of God-a subject for boasting "against error, and a matter for joy of the soul, and "a cause for thanksgiving and praise to God. Behold "now ye have with you by the grace of God also that "little book which is called Huppâkh Hushâbhê, which "was composed many years before this senseless opinion "spread abroad, about the time when this error began "to appear in the admonition of certain men, and it "sufficiently rebuketh the lack of understanding of those "who err by the refutation of rational opinions. Behold, "moreover, I sent to you with this little book also a "copy of that little book I wrote to correct the writings "of that stupid man at the time when I still had good "hope of him, which he like a seditious man who "stirreth up strife (?) and who uncovereth his shame, "in the madness of his mind carried whither he did "carry them with an evil intent, and to such a degree "that he became the originator of this tumult which "has been stirred up against me as well as against the
"whole Church of God. And it is a marvellous thing "that being absolutely ignorant of everything concern"ing what was right, there should be found in him "sufficient knowledge [to perform] this work of making "a tumult in the Church of God. Read, then, that "work in order that ye may know what things happened "through my care for him, and of his wicked cunning "against the truth, and whatsoever is meet for the fear "of God and for the love of truth which is in you and "for the good hope of the whole Church of God con"cerning you, be ye diligent to carry out by the help "of God. And may that merciful God by Whose hands "cometh every good thing with which He maketh "those who fear Him to abound, perfect you, in all "good to work His will alway, all the days of your lives. "Amen!"

The immediate cause of Sâhdônâ's defection is not altogether clear, but about the thoroughness of it there is no manner of doubt. It seems that whilst the members of the mission were passing through Apamea under the guidance of John, Bishop of the Scattered of the country of Damascus, they set out to hold a discussion on matters of faith with the monks of a certain Jacobite monastry. The result of the discussion was in favour of the Nestorians, but the wily Jacobites, though worsted in the argument, suggested that their opponents should go in with them to see their Abbot. John the Bishop and Îshô'-yahbh declined the invitation, but Sâhdônâ accepted it and went in and held converse with the Abbot. The details of the conversation are unknown, but at the end of it Sâhdônâ declared that he was converted to the doctrine of the Monophysites; his former friends declared that he had been
converted by sorcery and that as soon as the Abbot's hand had been laid upon his head he lost his reason.

In the year 647 the Patriarch Mârammêh died and the fathers met to consider who was to fill his place. On a certain day they assembled in the chamber in which the Patriarchs were elected, when it appeared that Îshô'-yahbh himself was the only candidate for the office whose claims were worthy of consideration, and being in difficulty about the matter they placed the authority for electing the new Patriarch in his hands, and, as we should expect, he elected himself, remarking as he did so, "I do not see among the present company any one who is more fitted for the dignity than myself, or who will administer it for you with greater honour than myself." ${ }^{\text {r }}$ This was, of course, a very natural result, for the Nestorian Church was greatly indebted to this wealthy man, and it is clear that there was no one present who could afford to maintain the Patriarchate with such splendour as he.

Soon after Îshố-yahbh became Catholicus he built a church for the monks at Bêth-'Âbhê to whom the benefactions of himself and his father had been very numerous. The church was made of stone, was well built, and provided with everything necessary for making the service both glorious and impressive. Wishing to form a source of supply from which to obtain monks and the service of the monastery generally, he decided to build a school near his own residence at Bêth-Âbhê. The account of his work and way in which his suggestion was received by the monks is

[^3]well told by Thomas of Marga (Bk. II, C. VIIf.) and we cannot do better than quote it here.
"Now as soon as Mâr Îshô'-yahbh had become "Catholicus and Patriarch, and had received all the ful"ness of the holy things, and the sacerdotal garments "which are given for the glory and advancement and "perfection of the holy Church, by the election of the "Holy Spirit, the cause, and giver and perfector of all "her sublimity, he showed forth diligent zeal and care "with all the solicitude which it is right should be "manifested by sons for the paternal inheritance of the "house in which they were reared. And he built in "this monastery a splendid temple, at great expense, "and with the participation of the holy and blessed in "all things Mâr Sabhr-Îshô", Metropolitan Bishop of "Bêth Garmai, and of Mâr George, his disciple, the "Metropolitan of Adiabene, concerning whom we will "afterwards speak, and of all the Bishops of this diocese "of Âthôr and Adiabene, the temple was consecrated "and beautified with all holy things. And a short "time after these things Mâr Îshô'-yahbh wished to "build a school near his cell and provide it with all "that was necessary, and to bring to it teachers and "masters and expositors and to gather together many "scholars and to provide for them in all things. And "he had made ready in his mind and had resolved "and decided to carry out this work in such a way "that for every child who was trained and instructed "therein the monastery might be near at hand for the "purpose of his becoming a disciple, so that the "school and monastery might become one; the school "to give birth to and rear scholars, and the monastery "to teach and sanctify them for the labours of the
"ascetic life. And he brought workmen and builders "to build what he wished.
"Now when the holy Rabban Kâm-Îshô", the head "of the monastery, and a large gathering of brethren "of his own opinion and manner of life saw what the "Catholicus was doing, that he was preparing to bring "uproar and noise upon them, and that henceforth they "must abandon the happiness and enjoyment of retire"ment, and all the course of the ascetic life, the glory "and beauty of which seclusion whether it be on the "tongue, or sight, or hearing, bringeth to a man, they "were all gathered together in the presence of Mâr "Catholicus, and with gentle entreaties, and humble "supplication, they begged Mâr Catholicus exceedingly "to desist from this work which would injure them in "several particulars saying, 'It is not good for us monks, "'while dwelling in our cells to be disturbed by the "'sound of chanting of the psalms and the singing of "'the hymns and offices, and by the noise of the voices "'of the school boys, and of those who keep watch by "'night. We have neither found it in writing nor have "'we received it by report that such a thing as this "'ever took place in any of the monasteries of the "'fathers. We are destined for weeping and mourning "'while we dwell in our cells, according to the doctrine "'which we have learned from our books, and we have "'also received this from Mâr Jacob, for during his "'lifetime and on his departure from us, he did not "'command us that one should teach the other to sing "'and to read the offices from books. Cease then "'from the effort of making us to become school boys "'again, and instead let each man dwell in his cell, "'and let each man read by himself. If, however, thou
"'wishest to build a school, behold all the towns and "'villages and the lands round about them; the whole " land of Persia is thy dominion, build then wheresoever "'thou wishest; but in this monastery a school shall "'not be built, for if thou dost build a school here, "'we shall all depart.'" And Mâr Catholicus said to them, "It is not necessary for you to be angry at a "matter which would bring you honour, and which "would expand and increase the glory of this monastry, "For since two excellent things, as it were two effectual "powers, viz., the one being practice, which is the "learning of the Divine Scriptures, and the other being "spiritual contemplation which is established by the work"ing of the mind and understanding would be perfected "in this place, this monastery, the house of our fathers, "would become a mirror of deeds to be emulated by "the wise and diligent, and the congregation of monks "would increase by reason of those who would be "instructed in doctrine in the school. And moreover, "I have the power [to build] for two reasons which "must overcome all obstacles; first, because I have "adorned and endowed this monastery with property "and earthly possessions, and secondly, because spirit"ually, I am master of all monasteries and convents; "and it is meet for me to honour and adorn my own "monastery rather than to glorify the monasteries of "others. Therefore by the word of our Lord cease "ye to be obstacles to the work, for the good pleasure "of God the Lord of all is therein."
"Now when Rabban Kâm-Îshồ, and Běrâz Sûrîn "the head of the congregation, who after Rabban Ḳ̂m"Îshô' obtained the headship of the monastery, saw that "they were irresistibly compelled to depart from the
"monastery, because they were not able to withstand "Mâr Îshô'-yahbh, they, together with seventy solitaries "belonging to this congregation, made ready with one "accord, and at night, unperceived by Mâr Catholicus, "they went into the Martyrium, and took away the "coffin of the holy Mâr Jacob their spiritual father. "And thus weeping and crying and murmuring that "they should never again see this monastery, and that "their departure was for ever, they all went forth up "above Herpâ a village of Saphsâphâ, prepared to build "a monastery in which they might lay Rabban Jacob, "and where they might continue the course of their "ascetic life and end their days. And they had made "ready to bring stones and had prepared materials for "the construction of a temple and cells, and those "blessed men did not perceive that God would shortly "bring them back to the inheritance of their father "Jacob."
"Now although the over zealousness of the will of "Mâr Îshô'-yahbh was not praiseworthy in the sight "of these holy men and appeared to them to be a "hindrance-as indeed it was-to their ascetic manner "of life, nevertheless it appeared that the zealousness "of will of the holy man might at the end result in a "beautiful ending, and he therefore determined to make "it a good thing however much it might be displeasing "to the monks. And the Lord Jesus Christ Himself "who saw the thoughts of both parties, on the one "side Mâr Îshô"-yahbh wishing to build a school for "the increase of divine doctrine and spiritual growth, "and on the other the monks fleeing away from this "for the sake of love for Him, that in quietness, and "without any disturbance they might take pains to
"please His Lordship, even as the Ashimonian desert "in which they lived taught them to do, showed Mâr "Catholicus on the night in which the holy men went "forth, when he was lying on the bed of his holiness, "half asleep and half awake, a vision in which a large "eagle, strong of body and long of pinions, and having "many eaglets on its back, went forth from the Mar"tyrium where Rabban Jacob was buried, and flew away "from the monastery towards the north, and he heard "the noise of the twittering and the chattering of the "eaglets which were upon his back as if their food "had been taken away from them. And he woke up "with a start, and the dream and the vision which he "had seen made him marvel and wonder. And he "called for the sacristan by the hand of his disciple, "and he came to him and before he could question "him the sacristan said to him, 'A short time ago the "'head of the monastery and Bërâz Sûrîn came with "'seventy men and they took the body of Rabban "'Jacob and departed; and behold the whole con"'gregation is making ready to depart from this "'monastery after them.' And when the blessed Mâr "Îshô'-yahbh heard these things, he knew that what "he wished to do was not the will of God, and he "rose up on that day and wrote to the holy men to "come back to their monastery. And he departed to "Kuphlânâ his village and he built there the school "which he had prepared to build in this monastery; "and those blessed men turned and came back to their "cells."

Soon after Îshô'-yahbh abandoned his project of building a school at Bêth 'Âbhê, he found himself involved in a very serious dispute with Simon the

Metropolitan of Rew-Ardashìr and of the Arabs of Al-Katar on the Persian Gulf, concerning the validity of his own ecclesiastical authority over them. It is not anywhere expressly stated, but there seems to be little doubt that the manner in which Îshô'-yahbh had caused himself to be elected Catholicus was not wholly approved of by the Persian Nestorians. The plea which Simon urged was that he and his congregation were not subject to the ecclesiastical authority of the Catholicus of Seleucia, but were under the rule of their own Metropolitan who was himself wholly independent. On the other hand Îshô'-yahbh took his stand upon the view that the primate of Seleucia was tradionally the head of the Nestorian Church of Persia, and with an ingenuity which we can only admire, supported by a series of arguments of a remarkable character, he succeeded in preventing an open breach between himself and Simon, and so, for a time at least, induced the Persians to submit to the authority of the Catholicus of Seleucia. This temporary peace was arranged by letter, and in the third part of Îshô'-yahbh's epistles we have fortunately preserved for us a series of seven epistles which Îshô'-yahbh himself wrote to the various orders of the Persian Church at Rew-Ardashirand Kaṭar. The first two are addressed to Simon himself and may fairly be termed master-pieces of persuasive eloquence. In order, however, that Simon might not be able to suppress any of the views of his spiritual lord when discussing the matter with his Bishops, Îshô'-yahbh himself addressed a letter to them in which he set forth his own views in a definite manner. Fearing that the congregations of Katar might not see eye to eye with those in authority over them, he also
wrote two lengthy epistles to the inhabitants of Kaṭar. As this district also abounded in monks and ascetics who were Nestorians, he took steps to bring his opinions before them in his own way and in his own words, and what these were we are well able to judge by two lengthy, characteristic epistles. These it is hoped will be translated and discussed in a future part of this work, and contenting ourselves for the present with referring the reader to Dr. Budge's work (Thomas of Margâ, Vol. ii I54-I74) where the full text of the seven epistles is given, we pass on to mention briefly the literary works which stand to the credit of Îshô'yahbh in the catalogue of 'Abdh-Îshô'.'

II. A series of admonition for the use of beginners in the ascetic life.
III. A new Edition of the Hudhrâ, or service book for the Sundays of the whole year, for Lent and for the fast of Nineveh; this he prepared with the competent help of Henân-îshô'.
IV. A treatise on Baptism.
V. A new Edition, with additions, of the prayers which were to be used by penitents.
VI. A form of service for the consecration of churches.
VII. Forms of service to be used at the ordinations of all kinds of monks.
VIII. A series of responses and metrical homilies.
IX. Three series of Pastoral letters.
X. Certain commentaries on the Holy Scriptures.
XI. A series of epistles of a comforting nature.
' Assemânî B. O. iin. pt. i, p. I 37 ff. See also Duval, Anciennes littératures chrétiennes Vol. ii, pp. 371, 372.
XII. A series of Polemics against his religious opponents.
XIII. A life of Îshô'-Sabhrân who was a convert from Zoroastrianism.
Îshô'-yahbh served the office of Catholicus for seven years and three months, according to 'Amr (ed. Gismondi p. 33). But this statement does not agree with other writer's views about his life; he died about the year 658 and was buried in the monastery of Bêth 'Âbhê to the glory and renown of which he had so largely contributed.

## A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE SUBJECT MATTER

of the first series of the epistles which Îshô'-yahbh wrote during his tenure of the see of Môsul.
I. A letter addressed to Mâr Bâbhai the archimandrite of Mt. Îzlâ near Nisibis, concerning zeal for the orthodox faith. He refers to the danger which has arisen for the church in connection with the attacks of enemies from without, and also from the discontent which exists among the members of the household of faith, but above all from the sluggishness which has fallen on men's minds through the general tribulation which has come upon the community. He heartily applauds the zeal which Bâbhai has displayed in contending against these difficulties, and prays that God will exalt his honourable person to continue his work of sympathy and encouragement to the true believers for many years to come.
II. A letter to his honourable brother Mâr Sergius, condoling with him on the sickness which had befallen him and expressing the regret which he and all his
people in Môṣul felt when they heard the sad news. He hopes that Sergius will take steps to inform him how the providence of the grace of God is treating him in order that he may be consoled on hearing of Sergius' recovery, and may at all times confess the mercy which God has bestowed upon him.
III. Letter to the great and famous monk Henânîshố concerning a period of difficulty which had unexpectedly come upon the Church. He complains that the root of Christianity has begun to wither under the drought of priestly ministrations; he refers to the death of an eminent Nestorian dignitary and to the "Magian", the "persecutor of the religion of God," i. e., Khusrau II; he laments also the slumber of sluggishness which has gained dominion over the princes of the truth. He goes on to say that there is nothing left for a feeble person like himself to do but to send Henân-îshô a letter of lamentation, so that having stirred up his compassion he may obtain a pledge of consolation from the operation of the grace of God through the prayer of his friend, and the eyes which have been blinded by gloom and darkness may once more see. Îshô'yahbh trusts that the mention of his own miserable person may never depart from the prayer of his friend, and he hopes that he may be able to live during the remainder of his life in such a way as shall please God.
IV. A letter to the most learned Doctor of Divinity, Mâr Daniel of Arbela. This letter was called forth by one which had been written by Daniel to a certain abbot in which he appears to have alluded in flattering terms to Îshô'-yahbh, and to have saluted him. Îshô'yahbh was greatly pleased with the salutaton and says
that he received the homage of the writer's humility with a feeling of comfort that was mingled with boasting, for not only did the words please him but the manner in which they were spoken. This letter is of considerable interest, for it well exhibits the mastery which Îshố-yahbh possessed over the Syriac language, and illustrates the naïve mixture of conceit and humility which is so characteristic of his epistles.
V. Letter to Sabhrewâ̂î, a Persian, written probably in answer to one which described the persecutions of the Persian converts under Khusrau. Îshô'-yahbh encourages his correspondent to endure tribulation and points out that as the earth is cut and furrowed by the ploughshare and afterwards brings forth a rich harvest of grain as a result of the ploughing, so the Church will produce a rich crop of believers as the result of the fierce persecution to which it was being subjected. He concludes by hoping that God in His grace will hasten the operation of His mercy for our redemption.
VI. Letter to Hormizd, a fellow student in the college of Nisîbis. This letter was called forth by one in which his former companion had written some ignorant insult, and presuming on his old acquaintanceship with the Bishop, had made remarks of a most unseemly character. Îshô'-yahbh points out in dignified language to Hormîzd that he has already tried his patience very seriously, and hints that he should pray for strength to curb the viciousness of his wit, for otherwise he would not have a friend left. Îshô'-yahbh says he is quite prepared to receive gladly the bites of his friend's childishness in the body of his mind, but warns him that they must not be continued indefinately,
and after referring to the "stupid observations" in his letter, prays that God may give him wisdom in everything and may strengthen him in unity of love and the bond of peace.
VII. Letter to Sabhrîshố the abbot of the monastery of Mâr Selîbhâ, concerning the tribulations that had come upon the Nestorian Church after the death of Yazdîn. After referring to the friendship which existed between himself and Sabhrîshố and mentioning in a general manner the persecutions which were taking place, he reminds him that it is absolutely impossible for any man to sail over the troubled sea of this transitory world without suffering from the motion of its pain-giving waves. He further reminds him that he more than all men, has an anchor which is sufficient to hold fast the ship of his mind and prevent it from being driven hither and thither by the storm which was then raging. Îshô'-yahbh concludes by praying that Sabhrîshô may be preserved from disquiet of mind, and that he himself may have pleasure in intercourse with him.
VIII. Letter to Sergius a friend of îshô'-yahbh, written after the war with the Byzantine Greeks. After referring to the storm of war which hath roused the sea of the world by its turbulence and which has driven the ships of mankind to the remotest corners of the earth, he warns him not to be disturbed over much by the rumours which are travelling about, and hopes that he will take care as long as he is alive to give him joy in his health, either by coming to see him, or by writing to him; he concludes by saying that as they have escaped like brands from the burning they should give thanks to the grace
of God who has shewn mercy unto them in every thing.
IX. Letter to Mầr 'Abdhîshô' on the death of Henân-îshô' his master. In this epistle Îshô'-yahbh refers with considerable feeling to the death of Henânîshô', and describes the high position which the learning and ability of this pious man had won for him in the Nestorian Church. In referring to the great loss which they both have sustained, he says that incidents of this kind often make men to despair of the happiness which hath been promised to them and that in consequence even faith fighteth against itself. It is, however, necessary to believe firmly in God's promises, for He will never leave or forsake His people and His inheritance. Îshô'-yahbh goes on to say that he himself is suffering acutely through the loss which hath overtaken them, but he exhorts 'Abhdîshô' to strive to attain once more to happiness, and to pray that God's mercy may be shewn upon him. Finally he hopes that some happy chance will give him the opportunity of rejoicing in the sight of him, and begs that his salutation, with the kiss of love, may be given to the blessed, fathers and holy brethren who are with him.
X. Letter to the pious Mâr Habîbhâ and to the fathers and brethren who are with him in the monastery of Mount Îzlâ. In this letter Îshố-yahbh refers with affection to the exalted and most illustrious Mâr Babhai, who had departed to Heaven and had been adopted into the company of the Saints, and he offers them consolation, and reviews encouragingly the good work which they had done. He concludes by asking them to pray for his frailty so that he may be enabled to
pass the remainder of his days in a manner which shall be pleasing to the will of God.
XI. Letter to the monk Paul who had been elected to fill the office of Abbot in a certain monastery. This letter was written in answer to one sent by Paul, who appears to have preferred writing to Îshô'-yahbh instead of coming to see him. Of this behaviour Îshô'yahbh disapproves, and he advises him to pour himself out before the Lord at all times, to take his stand upon the truth and to fear nothing, for those who speak the truth are able to rebuke kings, especially if they perform the truth of which they speak. It is clear that Paul did not visit the Bishop through fear of his fellow monks, for he says, "if they try to persuade thee to remain do thou persuade them to keep the commandments; and if they do not keep them, they have already convinced thee that it is unnecessary for thee to stay with them. If it is necessary to go, set before them openly the causes of the departure, and then depart without anger and without reproach." The concluding part of the letter contains some useful admonitions as to the course of conduct which Paul should follow in his new office, and contains a salutation from Henân-îshô and the brethren.
XII. Letter to Mâr Hananyâ, a learned Doctor. In this letter Îshô'-yahbh acknowledges the receipt of a letter from Hananyâ and rejoices that he has recovered from the sickness which had fallen upon him. He declares that his letter contains great proof of insufficient love [towards God], and Îshô'-yahbh hints that his complainings are somewhat unreasonable. It is true that he has been sick and been reduced to abject poverty, nevertheless he is seventy years of age
and these years alone are a striking proof of the goodness which divine providence has displayed towards him. He exhorts him to put his hope in the Lord and to endure graciously the happiness which arises from sickness and poverty until he attains to the state of contentment of Lazarus and Job, and concludes with the words, "Pray then that thou mayest be provided for according to the will of our Lord, and may I see thee in peace and in the gladness which is of God."
XIII. Letter to Mâr Îshô'-yahbh II, Patriarch and Catholicus of the East. This letter is intended by Îshô'-yahbh to form an apology to the Patriarch because of his flight from his diocese at the time when fierce war was being waged between the Greeks and the Persians. The apology is verbose and full of vague explanations which, however, fail to convince the reader of anything except that the Bishop fled from his see just at the time when he was most needed. When we consider that Îshô'-yahbh was a man of considerable wealth this is not to be wondered at, for both the pagan Persians who were his fellow countrymen and the Greeks their enemies would regard the Nestorian Bishop as a lawful prey. Îshô'-yahbh admits the fact of his flight, but pleads in extenuation that he remained at his post as long as it was possible for him to do so, that he only fled under the spur of necessity, and that even then he left behind him a letter for the Patriarch in which he attempted to explain the facts of the case. He adroitly flatters the Patriarch by alluding to the gladness of excellence which he bestows everywhere on those who fear God, and says that numerous causes proclaim that zeal for the truth is right and proper for the Patriarch, and that the consciences of many
also affirm this; and he prays that the Dispenser of our happinesses may make to prosper by his hands the truth of His doctrine for the boasting of the community.
XIV. Letter to Mâr Theodore, a bishop. In this letter Îshô'-yahbh refers to the difficulties which have lain in the way of their meeting, and says that he has been prevented from seeing him by the necessity of attending to the affairs of the flock at Môsul. He declares that he is eager to see Theodore, and that he will use his greatest endeavours to visit the scattered Christians of Âthur in a few days' time.
XV. A letter to the monks in the monastery of Îzlâ who had been cut off from their brethren. This letter is addressed to Dâzônwâ̂̂, Gregory, Luke, Arzîshô', Stephen, Yazdîn, Bardôk, Simon, and the brethren collectively. The Bishop says that in view of his past experience of their monastery, he had no expectation of witnessing such a state of affairs as he now sees; he is further astonished because he has written twice to them and they have returned no answer to his letters. It is a terrible thing to see what has happened among the beloved children of Abraham the just, the heirs of Dâdîshố the righteous, and the pupils of the illustrious Bâbhâi. It is clear to him that the evil dissension which has sprung amongst them has been brought about by a man-devil instigated by that same Satan who sowed the seeds of disobedience in Paradise, and his heart is broken within him when he considers these things. He calls upon those to whom he writes to note the evil effect which their conduct will have upon the community in general, for their friends will sigh and lament and their enemies will
laugh and scoff at them. After a long series of exhortations and observations in which Îshô'-yahbh animadverts strongly on the behaviour of the monks who remained in Îzlâ, he says to them "Go forth after your brethren and gather them together, and if it is necessary to suffer on their behalf, spare not yourselves until ye have made them once more fellow-monks and associates in love." Finally he entreats his readers to let him know the truth of their minds in respect of all the matters about which he has written to them, and he says it is immaterial to him whether they write individually or collectively.
XVI. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to the monks of Bêth'Âbhê concerning their election of a new abbot. In this letter he addresses Simon, John, Kâm-îshố, Bar Denḥâ, Daniel Boraz-sôrîn, Barnôn, Îshồzekhấ, AphnîMâran, individually and the other monks collectively, and tells them that the strenuousness of the love which existed between them and himself induced him to believe that they would have sent him news of the death of their abbot. He goes on to say that he hears they are in doubt as to the selection of a new abbot, and he expresses his willingness to come to them and to take counsel together with them. He reminds them of the dying wishes of Rabban Jacob who was anxious that his successor should be the pious Mâr John. Mâr John had led the life of a monk for 70 years, of which 40 had been spent in the monastery of Bêth-'Âbhê with Rabban Jacob himself. He concludes with a veiled threat that he will write to the Patriarch on the subject, and also that he will take the first opportunity of talking the question of the election over with him. From other letters we learn that the monks of Bêth-
'Abhe followed their own dictates in the matter of the choice of an abbot, and that they elected Kâm-îshô'.
XVII. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to Kâm-îshô' the newly appointed abbot of Bêth-'Âbhê. He acknowledges the receipt of the letter which Kâm-îshô' had sent to him, and says that he thanked God that the brethren who brought it had been preserved on their way. In reference, however, to the request that he should visit them, he regrets to say that it is impossible for him to do so because his occupations are many and will prevent him. With reference to a further request that he would write the history of Rabban Jacob, he says that he is prevented from hour to hour, that his daily occupations fritter away his time, and that the labour of literary composition requires much protracted thought. As regards the matter of the troublesome person about whom Ḳâm-îshố has also written, he suggests that the only man who can set the matter right if he wishes to do so is the Metropolitan, and that if he is as negligent about this as he is about other things he must understand that the Bishop's wish is to have him annoyed. Finally Îshô'-yahbh tells Ḳâm-îshố that two courses are open to him. He can either put up with the annoyance of the man, or he must apply to the Patriarch. But whichever course is taken it should be taken quickly.
XVIII. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to Yazdeshâbhôr. This letter is probably one of a short series which Îshô'-yahbh wrote to Yazdeshâbhôr who was no doubt a Persian gentleman of high social position, on matters of faith and belief which were connected with the Nestorian dogmas about the twofold nature of Christ. It seems tolerably clear that Yazdeshâbhôr, although
addressed by Îshô'-yahbh as "a lover of God", held somewhat heretical opinions and the vagueness of Îshô'yahbh's letter to him shews that his skill was taxed to the utmost to keep this man within the fold. From the concluding portion of the letter we learn that Îshô'yahbh had already written to him on the subject, and he says that on some future occasion, if God wills, they will talk the matter over together mouth to mouth.
XIX. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to Yazdeshâbhôr in continuation. In this epistle Îshô'-yahbh expresses his willingness to be judged, but appears to be not wholly pleased with the way in which his former letter has been received. With reference to the heretic who appears to be leading Yazdeshâbhôr astray, Îshô'-yahbh thinks it would be much better if the man feel really disposed to turn aside from the path of the fear of God to the wandering in arrogance, if he neglected wholly the things which he had written, and if he performed by himself the things which ought not to be done, that it would be well for themselves to observe the things which are done wickedly by the hearing of the ear only and afar off. Finally Îshồ-yahbh exhorts the pious men to drive out any stumbling block that may be found among them, but also to remember that, after all, we are but dust which at one moment is exalted in prideful honour, and at another is scattered to the winds.
XX. Îshô'-yahbh to the chosen and God-loving Yazdegard. In this letter Îshố-yahbh acknowledges the receipt of a letter in which his friend writes his speculations on the soul and the motions thereof, and the body and the customs thereof, all of which Îshô'yahbh warmly praises. He acknowledges with gratitude
the encomiums which his friend bestows upon him, but at the same time, with a characteristic mixture of conceit and humility, disclaims any personal credit in the matter and attributes such qualities as he possesses to the operation of the Divine power. He acknowledges gratefully the greetings of Yazdegard and his friends, and concludes with a prayer that God will preserve their hearts blameless until the day of Christ.
XXI. Letter to the God-fearing and truly believing Mâr Îshô'-sabhran. In this letter Îshô'-yahbh says that he rejoices in his friend's good health and addresses to him words of encouragement, especially because Îshô'sabhran rests his expectation of spiritual benefit upon a weak and feeble person like himself. He prays that his faith may be firmly fixed upon the support of truth, and concludes his letter with a prayer that God will strengthen his weakness so that he will be able to perform His will always.
XXII. A letter to Îshô'-yahbh the Catholicus, referring to the restitution of one Shâbhôr to the communion of the Church by the act of the Patriarch. He says that Shâbhôr had made a public confession of his faith before many witnesses, and had merited the praise of the Most High in the presence of the congregation of the fearers of God. Îshô'-yahbh approves of the action of the Patriarch and prays that God will perfect every good work which he shall take in hand.
XXIII. A letter to Îshô'-yahbh the Catholicus. A letter of lamentation in which Îshô'-yahbh says that the cup of their misery hath reached the very dregs, and that it will be drained dry by them in tribulation. There is no way of escape and they have no refuge whereunto to flee, and they have no one to take
vengeance on those who torture them. A mighty worm hath come into being in the body of the community which hath vanquished already the majority of the members, and it is now hissing at the head of the community. He calls upon the Holy Father to take such steps that they have every hope and right to pray that he will, and he begs that he will cause a letter to be sent to him in order that he may have some relief. He asks the Patriarch to pray that he, Îshô'-yahbh, may be worthy of mercy, and that he may find such grace of penitence as will be sufficient for the healing of his sicknesses before he arrives at that impossible state that has come to many.
XXIV. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh the minister of the Church of God which is in Nineveh to the brethren in Mount Elpap. It is not easy to see exactly from this inflated letter of what misdemeanour the monks of Elpap had been guilty, but it would seem that their community had been troubled by one of the monks, and that his companions had dealt in a summary manner with him, and had ejected him from their society. The object of Îshố-yahbh's letter is to induce them to reconsider their decision, and to re-admit him on the condition that he submitted to suitable punishment. This letter is a good example of the methods by which Îshô'-yahbh endeavoured to obtain authority over the neighbouring monasteries to which from time to time, presumably, he made gifts. It seems that Îshô'- yahbh's power in the outlying districts was of a very shadowy character, and that he strove to increase it by writing specious and eloquent epistles similar to the example which we have before us.
XXV. Letter to Mâr Moses the priest, written in
answer to one which Moses had addressed to the Bishop with a view of bringing to his notice certain distressed persons who lived in and about the city of Nisibis. Îshô'-yahbh approves highly of the personal labours of Moses on behalf of the afflicted and distressed, but he is quite certain that his worthy friend has been deceived, that the distress has been over-stated, and that a series of lying reports have been spread about concerning it. Îshô'-yahbh laughs at the idea of there being any real distress in Nisibis, for he considers it to be in very affluent circumstances.
XXVI. Letter to Mar Luliyânê, acknowledging the receipt of a letter from this person which was not intended for the Bishop, but for another individual of the same name. In informing Luliyânê of the mistake which had been made, Îshô'-yahbh takes the opportunity of commending in warm and eloquent words his piety, and addresses to him words of encouragement with respect to his conduct in the future. Îshô'-yahbh sends the salutation of the poor Church in Nineveh, and begs for Luliyânê's prayers.
XXVII. Letter to John his brother in the Lord. Îshô'-yahbh complains that although he has longed to see John, many years have passed without the opportunity having occurred. He trusts that John will seize the first opportunity of coming to him, and begs him to write and inform him about all necessary matters.
XXVIII. Letter to Narses and to Mârmeh [Mâr'Ammeh]. Îshô'-yahbh states that the fact of their feeling compelled to write to him proves that the deathless love which they imagined existed between them was dead. For even though they may assert to the con-
trary, Îshô'-yahbh is certain this is the case. In conclusion he prays that his former dear friends may be in that state which it pleaseth God for them to be in, and that they may pray that he may be held worthy of mercy, and will find the grace of repentance which is suitable for the healing of his sicknesses, and that he may see them both whensoever the Lord willeth.
XXIX. Letter to Mâr Sâbhr-îshố the Bishop of Bêth Garmai, announcing to him the arrival of Sergius the priest, whom he was pleased to see, especially because he brought him news of his friend. He entreats Sâbhr-îshố to remember him in his prayers at the time when he offers up the sacrifice on behalf of every one before God. Finally he begs that whenever Sâbhrîshố finds any one coming towards his district he will send by him a letter giving him an account of his health.
XXX. Letter to Mâr Samuel, a priest, in which after quoting passages from Scripture which Îshô'-yahbh believes to have reference to the ascetic life, he addresses to Samuel words of encouragement and begs him to continue in the life of spiritual excellence which he is leading. He hopes to see him soon but, before this can take place, he begs him to pray for him daily.
XXXI. Îshô'-yahbh to Mâr John, a priest, acknowledging the receipt of the loving salutation by the hands of Sergius the teacher. Îshô'-yahbh says that he is rightly rejoiced by the news of his friend's health, even though he sent him no letter on the subject, as he ought to have done, and he calls upon him to be pleased to perform an act of bounden duty, and to pray for him that he may be enabled to lead the rest of his life in a manner which shall be pleasing to God.
XXXII. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to his namesake the Patriarch and Catholicus, stating that he has learned that his holiness has sent five epistles to him which, however, he has not received. He thinks that these have been intercepted on the way, but he rejoices nevertheless that the Patriarch's love should have made him indite these to him. In conclusion he entreats the Patriarch to pray that Îshô'-yahbh may be preserved from all material and spiritual danger in the purity which is seemly to his station.
XXXIII. Letter from Îshô-yahbh to Hormîzd, a former fellow student at Nisibis, probably in answer to a humble letter of apology, or in recognition of some act of penitence for his former misbehaviour towards him. Îshô'-yahbh admits that his friend deserves very great credit for what he has done. He trusts that Hormizd will in future profit by the forbearance both of himself and of his friends, even though the reward, the honourable payment of the debt on his own part, may be somewhat diminished. Finally he prays that the God of peace may be with Hormîzd, and may keep him without stumbling.
XXXIV. Letter to the honourable man Mâr Allâhâzekhâ the priest and doctor, acknowledging the receipt of greetings and salutations on two separate occasions, and lamenting his own remissness, and stating that it is owing to the fact that he has sunk into the abyss of necessity, and in the whirlwind of confusion, and the waves of tribulation. Îshô'-yahbh ascribes happiness to the God-loving soul of his friend, but declares himself unworthy of the praise which is lavished upon him in his friend's letter. He exhorts him to trust in the Lord and to keep His way.
XXXV. Letter to the Patriarch in which Îshố-yahbh acknowledges with gratitude the affectionate care with which the Catholicus watches over the children of grace, and over himself in particular, and extols the fact that the daily worry and trouble of his office, and the numerous impediments which are incidental to the times in which they live, do not prevent his holiness from giving practical expression to this all-pervading care. Îshô'-yahbh begs the Patriarch to gratify the aspiration of his desire, and to grant him a meeting, and he begs that, until this takes place, he will bestow upon his unworthy self, prayers that he may be enabled to live the remaining days of his life in a manner which shall be pleasing to God.
XXXVI. A letter to the honourable Mâr Abhâ, the Bishop, acknowledging the receipt of a letter, and referring in high terms of praise to the brave patience which Mâr Abhâ has displayed under the persecutions and afflictions which have fallen upon him. Îshô'-yahbh thanks God that his friend has been permitted to be a partaker in the sufferings which have arisen through the love of God's truth, and he encourages him to endure boldly yet further tribulations. He begs that Mâr Abhâ will pray for the "miserable Church" of Nineveh, and for those who have taken refuge therein, that they may have the desire to participate with him in a brotherly manner in voluntary sufferings; all the members of the Church at Nineveh, both those which are baptised and those which are not, entreat his prayers.
XXXVII. Letter to the Patriarch lamenting that he has been unable to visit the Catholicus and the Catholicus unable to visit him. Îshô-yahbh says that by the
grace of God he is still able to find his daily bread, and to enjoy a little rest, and to carry out the service of the Church in a moderate manner. He refers to the persecutors of the Church who resemble Herod and Pilate, and to some members of the community, who like Judas plot the destruction of the Church even whilst the sacramental bread is on their lips. Îshô'yahbh fears that his own simple tongue, even with the living speech, will not be able to describe adequately the marvellous character of the things which had been performed, but he will keep them in his mind until he sees the Patriarch, and the two of them can converse at length together. He would meanwhile ask the Patriarch to rejoice because of the things which have taken place, for God's enemies have been put to the lie in a mighty manner. Their heretical foes have been broken and put to shame, and their hope has been destroyed.
XXXVIII. Letter to the Catholicus concerning the illegal consecration as Bishops of two monks, who were called Shâmîshốr and Narsai. It seems that the Metropolitan had made an agreement with these men who had been ordained in an uncanonical manner, and that they, continuing a system of illegal ordination, had consecrated to the bishopric of Âdhôrbaijân a man whose country they did not know. They did not even know his name, or in what style and condition of life he had been reared, or whether he had had a trade or profession in the world, or any position in the Church whatsoever, or where he came from, or where he was going; what was far worse they did not even know if he belonged to the orthodox Faith. The good Îshô'yahbh exclaims, "A man with such antecedents as these
it was that they ordained to be a bishop!" He hardly expects the Patriarch to believe what he is saying, for it is exceedingly hard for any one to imagine that intelligent men would perpetrate such a blind and senseless act of folly as this. If it please God that they two may meet, Îshô'-yahbh will give the Patriarch the fullest and most exact information on the subject, both as regards what happened before, and after that terrible event.
XXXIX. Letter to the honourable Mâr Môses the priest, acknowledging the receipt of a letter. Îshô'-yahbh is far from being satisfied with the contents of his correspondent's epistle, and points out to him that he cannot have read the letters which he had sent to him some time previously on the very subject about which he himself now writes once more. He therefore declines to discuss the matter any further. From the letter of Moses, however, Îshô'-yahbh learns, even as he has already learnt from other people, that the breath of want has touched the country in which he lives, and that the prosperous people thereof have already suffered from the vicissitudes of fortune and have been compelled to beg; that those who have been wealthy for a considerable time should beg rather than those who have been always poor, is somewhat contrary to experience. When Îshô'-yahbh heard of this famine he was greatly distressed, and whatsoever bread [i.e., grain] he possessed he devoted to the public weal as far as possible, that is to say, he sold some, and some he gave away, having of course due regard to the pressing want of the people, as well as to that special occasion and to various individuals and to certain causes. Of the grain which was given away, ten days' supply fell
by lot to Moses, and twenty days' supply were sold to him. If Îshô'-yahbh could have sent more he would have done so, and he tells Moses with some asperity to take what has been sold him for what it is, and to despise as a thing of no value that which was sent to him voluntarily.
XL. Letter to the pious Mâr Cyriacus the Metropolitan Bishop, concerning the election of a bishop for the city of Bâlâdh. Îshô'-yahbh reminds the bishop, with whom the actual appointment appears to rest, that the people of Bâlâdh themselves would choose the honourable Mâr Mârûzan, and that since it has seemed to them that their hope is not likely to be fulfilled, they have remained in a state of suspense and trouble. Îshô'-yahbh puts before the Bishop a number of considerations which he considers to show the advisability of electing a candidate chosen by the congregation, and urges Mâr Cyriacus with great eloquence to make the appointment.
XLI. Letter to the honourable and chosen Mâr Yazdanan (or, Yazd-han), concerning the persecutions and afflictions which the faithful are suffering at the hands of princes and governors throughout the country. This matter has weighed so heavily upon the mind of Îshô'-yahbh that he has at length found himself compelled to send to him Mâr Henân-îshố the abbot, so that the prince Yazdanan may learn from him what things he ought to do. He beseeches him not to change his manner of life which has hitherto been devoted to the fear of our Lord, and not to give the enemies of the Lord an apportunity to injure His people. He admonishes Yazdanan with gentleness and wishes to know why he is not so devout a Christian as
formerly, and he bids him remember that we are dust, that our days are as a shadow, and that our lives are like water which has been poured out and cannot be collected again. Îshô'-yahbh knows that his correspondent is a strong-hearted and fearless man, and he bids him to employ his best qualities for the protection of the Church. It is meet that he should show forth boldly his interest in the Church, and he calls upon him to explain what grounds of complaint he has for being angry with the priests. Îshô'-yahbh believes that if he will repent and call upon God to help him to regain his former position in the Christian life, God will hear him and have mercy upon him and will enable him to look upon the ministers of the church in the right light, when he will straightway honour the priests of God and will rejoice with them and will associate with them. If only he will do this Îshô'yahbh and all the members of the Church will give thanks and gratitude to God.
XLII. Letter to Mâr Gabriel the Metropolitan Bishop. Îshô'-yahbh laments that his sinful lot has made him to dwell by the side of the nest of Satan wherefrom yearly a brood of poisonous serpents and deadly vipers pours forth. The subject of this letter is the unscrupulous audacity of the Jacobites who attempted to build a church in Môṣul. Îshố-yahbh hints that they bribed the ruling men of the city, that they were helped by a number of evil men who had formerly been Jacobites, and that they were assisted also by the people of Tigrit and by the agency of Satan. He insultingly remarks that they went out to the dungheap before the gate of the city, they who were the dung of the Church, and that they built a house of derision and
contempt which they called a "church" close by the side of the place which was used by all the inhabitants of the city as a latrine. They went to this place because they had to go there, and then stirred up mischief. The ringleader of the heretics was a man whose father was an orthodox Christian and his mother a heretic. This letter was sent to Mâr Gabriel by the abbot Henân-îshô', and he asks him to receive him as he is wont to do in the Lord, and to send him back to Môṣul quickly.
XLIII. Letter to the beloved and venerable clergy, and to the believing people of the city of Bâlâdh, acknowledging the receipt of a letter which he has read and saying that he thanks God for their zeal. He is, however, puzzled to understand what is the true state of the case in respect to the election of their bishop, for at present he does not understand who has been elected. Party feeling appears to have run very high, for throughout this letter Îshô'-yahbh exhorts his readers to keep peace and unity.
XLIV. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to a certain honourable gentleman who was probably a high official of the city of Môṣul, begging him in the name of himself and of all God fearing people to desist from the work on which he is engaged, and to withdraw himself from the position which he has taken up and which has made him the talk of all people. After a number of verbose expressions in which flattery is adroitly mingled, Îshô'-yahbh says that the man who has been his helper and who has been his associate in many dangers, has been withdrawn from him, and he begs the honourable man to whom he writes to restore his services to him. He is quite convinced
that it is in his power to send the man back to him, if he is disposed to do so, and he goes on to say that such an act would bring satisfaction and peace to the churches and monasteries, and to the holy men who are in them.
XLV. A letter to the pious Mâr Cyriacus the Metropolitan Bishop of Nisibis, in which Îshô'-yahbh says how greatly he has been distressed at the report of the troubles which have fallen on Nisibis. He says that he has sent to him 1000 kûrinn of barley and 100 gévîzề according to his letter, and he hopes that if after a short time he has need of the grain, Mâr Cyriacus will restore it to him, with a suitable increment as payment for the loan. If, however, God preserves Môṣul from famine, the great Church of Môṣul shall be his debtor for ever to the extent of iooo measures of barley.
XLVI. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to Ḳâm-îshố, Sanyâ, Bârbôsâ, Henân-îshô‘, Isaac Bâr-sahdhe, and Dâdh-yazd. Îshô'-yahbh says that he has heard, both recently and some time ago, a rumour which however seemed to him to be at first incredible, but about which he has now no doubt, that a devil who lived at Elpap has come to them and has poisoned their hearts with false doctrines and departed. As a result he also hears his friends are rolling about like senseless stones, that their mouths have become dumb, and that their members have dried up from good works. Îshô'-yahbh says he feels himself bound to write to them on this subject, and that he hopes the reading of this letter may have

[^4]a beneficial effect upon them, he hopes also that his prayers will lift them up out of the mire into which they are now sunk.
XLVII. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to Mâr Gabriel the Metropolitan Bishop of Tigrit, informing him that the power of God hath been made manifest in an extraordinary manner in its dealings with the Jacobites, and he trusts that a further proof of its strength may be shewn in such a way as to smite completely the power and arrogance of the prideful man who attempted to disturb the church. He hopes that Mâr Gabriel will marvel, and marvelling will give thanks to God and glorify him.
XLVIII. A letter from Îshô'-yahbh to John the Archdeacon and to Tenî the chief of the believers at Môṣul, acknowledging with gratitude the petition which they have made him to become their Metropolitan. He points out that the nominal headship of their church would be an empty thing, and it is clear that he had no intention of accepting it, but he expresses his willingness to direct them in the things which will benefit their church, if it please God that he should do so.
XLIX. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to Mâr Habhîbhâ, Mâr Dầzônwâ̂î, Mâr Narsai, Mâr Mầrmeh and others, acknowledging the receipt of a letter from them, and thanking God for their good health. Îshô'-yahbh calls upon them to make up their minds about a certain matter, and to come over to his side, and either to work with him or to pray for him.
L. Letter from Îshô'-yahbh to Mâr Gabriel the Metropolitan Bishop, to Mâr Hormîzd of Bêth Lâphât, and to Mâr Marmeh acknowledging the receipt of their letter and saying that as soon as he had seen
the superscription of their epistle, he was struck with wonder at what had happened, and was so nervous that he could not believe the matter. When he had opened the letter and had read what was inside he marvelled still more, and he goes on to describe the reasons why he feels that he dares not blame what has been done, and why on the other hand he is unable to approve of it. He refers to the death of the Metropolitan Mâr John, which appears to have been at the time of his writing a recent occurrence, and from the general drift of his verbose and somewhat obscure expressions we may conclude that his friends thought Îshô'-yahbh would make an excellent successor to the throne of the dead ecclesiastic. Judging by Îshô'yahbh's astonishment at the manner in which they had addressed their letter to him, we are probably right in assuming that they had actually bestowed upon him the title of Metropolitan. The latter part of the letter contains many exhortations to his friends to let brotherly love and unity exist between them and himself, and he expresses the determination of coming to see them as soon as he can possibly do so.

## VARIANT READINGS.

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L. Îshố-yahbH to mâr gabriel the metropolitan bishop.








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XLIX. ÎSHỐ- YAHBH TO MAR H. HBBîbHÂ, MÂR DĚZÔNWÂ̂̂ AND OTHERS.



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XLVIII. $̂$ ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO JOHN THE ARCHDEACON AND TENî OF ARBELA.









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XLVII. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO MÂR GABRIEL THE METROPOLITAN

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XLIV. ÎSHỐ - YAHBH TO A CERTAIN HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN.

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XLI. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO THE HONOURABLE MÂR YAZDANNAN.




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xxxv. îshồ- yahbh to mâr catholicus the patriarch.


xxxiv．îshố－yahbh to the honourable mâr allâhî̀－ZĔKhî．

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xxx. îShố-yAhbl to mâr Samuel, a PRIEST.


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> XXXI. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO MÂR JOHN, A PRIEST.


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## Xxix. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO MÂR SABHR-ÎSHỐ THE BISHOP.

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XXVII. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO JOHN, HIS BROTHER IN THE LORD.

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xXVIII. ÎSHỐ- yAhbH TO NARSES AND MÂRMEH, bRETHREN IN THE LORD.

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XXV. ÂSHỐ-YAHBH TO MÂR MOSES THE PRIEST.

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XX. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO THE GOD-LOVING YAZDĔGARD.






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XVII. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH'S ADMONITION TO KÂM-ÎSHÔe, A RECENTLY APPOINTED ARCHIMANDRITE.









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XVI. ÎSHỐ- YAHBH TO THE MONKS OF BÊTH ${ }^{〔}$ ÂBHê ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW ARCHIMANDRITE.






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XV. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO DÂZÔNWÂ̂̂̀, GREGORY, ARZ-ÎSHỐ, yazdîn, etc. of mount îzlâ.

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XIV. ÎSHỐ -YAHBH TO MÂR THEODORE, A BISHOP.

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XIII. A LETTER OF APOLOGY FROM ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO MÂR ÎSHỐ-YAHBH THE CATHOLICUS.




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XII. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO MAR HANANYÂ ON HEARING THAT HE HAD BEEN ROBBED AND WAS SICK.









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X. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO MÂR HABBÎBHÂ AND HIS FELLOW MONKS AT MOUNT ÎZLÂ.




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ix. îshố'-yahbh to mâr 'abhd-îshố' on the death of HIS ABBOT.

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VIII. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO HIS FRIEND SERGIUS AFTER THE WAR.




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VII. ÎSHỐ -YAHBH TO MÂR SABHR-ÎSHỐ THE ARCHIMANDRITE OF MÂR ṢビLÎBHÂ.




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V．ÎSHÖ－YAHBH TO SABHRĔWÂî，HIS BROTHER IN THE LORD．
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VI．ÎSHỐ－YAHBH TO HÔRMIZD，A FELLOW STUDENT AT NISIBIS．

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IV. $\hat{I} S H \hat{O}^{C}-Y A H B H$ TO DANIEL OF ARBELA WHO HAD PRAISED HIM IN A LETTER TO THE ABBOT.





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III. ÎSHỐ-YAHBH TO HENÂN-ÎSHỐ CONCERNING SOME UNTOWARD EVENTS WHICH HAD HAPPENED.




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II. EPISTLE TO MÂR SERGIUS ON HEARING OF HIS ILLNESS.


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## THE BOOK OF CONSOLATIONS

BY
MÂR ÎSHỐ-YAHBH.

## Part I.

I. EPISTLE TO MÂR BÂBHAI, THE ARCHIMANDRITE, CONCERNING ZEAL FOR THE ORTHODOX FAITH.




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[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ Aussiige, Note I8oo.

[^1]:    I Gibbon, Decline and Fall. C. XLVI.
    ${ }^{2}$ Cf. Thomas of Mârgâ. Ed. Budge Vol. i, p. 35.

[^2]:    x Thomas of Mârĝa. Ed. Budge Vol ii. p. 127.

[^3]:    ${ }^{1}$ Cf. Gismondi De Patriarchis Nest., Arabic Text p. 56. Latin trans. p. 32.

[^4]:    ${ }^{\text {r }}$ Possibly the same as the ancient Mesopotamian measure gur. (今)

